Shaykh Sayyid Alawi Maliki Makki says:

When someone from India comes to Makka and we want to see if he is Sunni, we simply mention the name of Imam Ahmad Raza before him. If his face lights up with happiness, we know he is a Sunni and if he shows unhappiness at his mention, we know he is something else.

His demise

The Imam of Ahlu's Sunnah, the Mujaddid, Shaykh al-Islam wa'l Muslimeen, Imam Ahmad Raza Khan Hanafi Qadri Barkati Barelwi passed away on 25th Safar, 1340 AH, at the age of 65. From beginning to end, this shining star of the Ummah was an embodiment of Shari'ah. Hence, even on his death bed, he ordained that nothing be done in contravention to the Sunnah. He said:

> "From the food of the Fatiha, nothing should be given to the rich. Only the poor will be fed and that too with utmost respect. No-one will treat the poor badly and nothing will happen that is against the Sunnah".[20]

In the majority of cases, food from the Fatiha is only for the rich and only the poor miss out. Imam Ahmad Raza destroyed this ugly practice which was snatching the rights of the poor and in doing so he revived a dying Sunnah of the dear Prophet sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam.

The benevolence of Allah and His Prophet sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam remained with Imam Ahmad Raza till his demise. He said that my weakness has left me in such a state that I may not even recognise some of my own relatives but all the matters of the Shari'ah are still with me and I have not forgotten any of them.

May Allah shower abundant blessings on the grave of the great Imam and may He raise us with him on the day of Judgement.

ليس على الله بمستنكر
ان يجمع العالم فى واحد

This booklet is available at www.aqdas.co.uk. It was compiled at the request of Mawlana Abu Zuhra Rizwi of the Raza Research and Publishing Board, Manchester.

[20] Wisaya Sharif, written on 28th October, 1921 – Imam Ahmad Raza

Imam Ahmad Raza Khan Barelwi
Mujaddid of the 14th Century

شيخنا العلامه احمد رضا خان بريلوى

Extracted from the writings of the scholars of Ahlu's Sunnah wal Jama'ah

Translated by
Muhammad Aqdas

Narrations that mention a Mujaddid

It is narrated by Abu Huraira radiyallahu ta'ala 'anhu that Rasulullah sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam said:

"Indeed Allah will choose in each century a man who will revive the religion and make it anew."[1]

'Allama Haqqi in his *Hashiya Siraj al-Munir Sharh Jami' Saghir* writes: "My Shaykh said that the Hadith masters agree that this hadith is Sahih" and the Hafiz Imam Jalaluddin Suyuti writes the same in his *Mirqat al-Sa'ud Hashiya Sunan Abu Dawud*.

The meaning of Tajdeed

It means that one possesses at least one characteristic which will benefit the Ummah of Rasulullah sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam such as teaching, preaching, ordaining the good and forbidding the evil, striving against the ills of society and supporting the Ahl al-Haq [people of truth].

Qualities of a Mujaddid

It is not necessary that a Mujaddid be a Mujtahid but it is critical that he be a Sunni with the correct 'Aqida, a scholar, a master of Islamic Sciences, a great supporter of the religion, a fearless voice against the Mubtadi'yin [innovators] and without fear in speaking the truth, will not serve the religion for worldly benefits, God-fearing, pious, an embodiment of Shari'ah and Tariqah [spirituality] and that he be famous both at the end of the century in which he is born and at the beginning of the century in which he demises.

The Mujaddid of the 14th Century

The Mujaddid of the 14th Century is Mawlana Haji Hafiz Qari Muhammad Ahmad Raza Khan Qadri Barkati Barelwi. He was born in the town of Bareilly [northern Indian state of U.P.) at the time of Zuhr prayer on 10th Shawwal, 1272 AH and demised on 25th Safar, 1340 AH. He was named *Muhammad* and a historic name of *al-Mukhtar* (1272 AH) was given to him. Due to his fervent love for the Messenger sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam; Imam Ahmad Raza would write *Abdul Mustafa* before his name. He was a master of Abjad and he deduced his year of birth from the verse of the Holy Qur'an: "These are they in whose hearts Allah has inscribed faith and helped them with a spirit from Himself".[2]

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[1] Abu Dawud
[2] Qur'an, 58:22

unmatched; the Imam; my master; my refuge; Hazrat Ahmad Raza Khan Barelwi. May Allah make us and all Muslims benefit from his life and may He give me his mission as his mission is the mission of Rasulullah sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam .[14]

Shaykh Muhammad Mukhtar bin 'Ata al-Jawi al-Makki writes:

Indeed the writer is the leader of the scholars and researchers and all his words are the truth. He is from the miracles of our Prophet sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam and Allah revealed this miracle at the hands of the Imam.[15]

Shaykh Musa Ali Shami al-Azhari Ahmad Darderwi Madani writes:

امام الائمة المجدد لهذه الامه

The Imam of Imams and the Mujaddid of the Muslim ummah.[16]

Shaykh Muhammad Yaseen Ahmad al-Khayari Madani praises him thus:

هو امام المحدثين

He is the Imam of the Hadith scholars.[17]

Concerning the vastness of his knowledge and the extensiveness of proofs that he gives, 'Allama Mawlana Tafaddal al-Haq Makki writes:

These answers show that the writer is an 'Alim, 'Allama, Fahhama and he is to the scholars as the eye is to the body.[18]

Due to weakness, Shaykh al-Khutaba, 'Ustad al-'Ulama, 'Allama Mawlana al-Shaykh Ahmad Abu'l Khayr Mirdad was not able to visit Imam Ahmad Raza at the latter's residence. The Shaykh heard *al-Dawlah al-Makkiya* from cover to cover and when Imam Ahmad Raza was about to leave Makka, he respectfully touched the feet of the Shaykh. The Shaykh addressed Imam Ahmad Raza and said:

انا أقبل أرجلكم انا أقبل نعالكم

I would kiss your feet and I would kiss your shoes.[19]

Shaykh Mirdad also addressed Imam Ahmad Raza as:

شيخنا العلامه احمد رضا خاں بريلوى

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[14] Ibid, p.46
[15] al-Dawlah al-Makkiya, p.166
[16] Ibid, p.203
[17] Rasa'il-e-Ridawiya, Mawlana Abdul Hakeem Shahjanhanpuri, p.148
[18] Ibid, p.136
[19] al-Malfuz, vol.1, p.10 - Imam Ahmad Raza

Ilahabadi [d. 1350 AH] and Sayyid Muhammad Fakhir Ilahabadi; Mawlana Abdul Muqtadir Badayuni [d. 1334 AH] addressed him as:

مجدد مأة حاضره

This received support from the scholars and public alike. Various other scholars also referred to him as a Mujaddid. Hence, Shaykh Sayyid Isma'il bin Khalil [d. 1324 AH], librarian of Haram, writes about him:

بل اقول لو قيل فى حقه انه مجدد هذا القرن لكان حقًا و صدقًا

Translation: "Moreover, I say that if he is called the Mujaddid of this century, then this would be correct and the truth".

Imam Ahmad Raza once said:

> "It is the grace of Allah that He has allowed me to do as much work in one lifetime that would be enough for ten lifetimes".

Imam Ahmad Raza and the scholars of Haramayn

Imam Ahmad Raza was not just a personality revered and accepted by the scholars of the Indian Subcontinent – even the scholars of Haramayn accepted his leadership and his status as the Mujaddid of his era. These are the words of some scholars of Makka in praise of Imam Ahmad Raza. Mawlana Muhammad Yusuf al-Afghani al-Makki writes:

الذى افتخربوجوده الزمان

He whose existence the era is proud of.[11]

Shaykh Salih Kamal Mufti Hanafiya writes:

A sea of merits, the coolness of the eyes of scholars, Mawlana, Muhaqqiq, the blessing of the era, Ahmad Raza Khan Barelwi. May Allah preserve him.[12]

Shaykh Abu'l Khayr Mirdad writes:

Indeed he is that 'Allama and Fadil who solves problems with the light of his eyes – his name is Ahmad Raza Khan.[13]
Shaykh Abdur Rahman Dahan writes:

The one on whom the scholars rely; the 'Allama of his time; the unique; for whom the scholars of Makka bear witness that he is the leader; the

[11] Husam al-Haramayn, p.62
[12] Ibid, p.25
[13] Ibid, p.23

Education and upbringing

His initial education was taught by (1) Mirza Qadir Baig Barelwi (d. 1297 AH) and he completed his education with his father, (2) Mawlana Naqi Ali Khan Barelwi. He also took knowledge of Islam and Ijazahs in Hadith from the following scholars:

3. Mawlana Abdul Ali Khan Rampuri (d. 1303 AH) – student of 'Allama Fazle Haq Khairabadi
4. Shah Abu'l Husain Ahmad Noori Marahrawi (d. 1324 AH) – student of Mawlana Noor Ahmad Badayuni
5. Shah Aale Rasool Marahrawi (d. 1297 AH) – student of Shah Abdul Aziz Muhaddith Dihlawi (d. 1239 AH)

> Imam Ahmad Raza went to Shah Aale Rasool Marahrawi along with his father and 'Allama Abdul Qadir Badayuni (d. 1319 AH) who was the son of 'Allama Fazle Rasool Badayuni (d. 1289 AH). During their very first meeting, Imam Ahmad Raza was granted Bay'ah, Ijazah and Khilafah. Upon seeing this extraordinary event, some of the disciples of Marahra exclaimed that they had been busy in worship and spiritual training for such a long time yet had not received the same benevolence. Shah Aale Rasool answered this query by saying: "Others have to be trained whilst these people came already trained". He then said: "I was worried for a long time over a problem, but, by the grace of Allah, today that issue has been resolved. When Allah asks me on the day of Judgement, "Oh Aale Rasool! What have you bought with you?" I will then present my Ahmad Raza".

6. Imam al-Shafi'iyah Shaykh Husain Salih (d. 1302 AH)
7. Mufti Hanafiya Shaykh Abdur Rahman Siraj (d. 1301 AH)
8. Mufti Shafi'iyah Shaykh Ahmad bin Zayn Dahlan (d. 1299 AH) – Qadi al-Quddat, Makka

His knowledge

Imam Ahmad Raza specialised in over fifty branches of knowledge including: Tafsir, Hadith, Fiqh, Usul al-Fiqh, 'Aqaid and Kalam, Tasawwuf, Nahw, Sarf, History, Logic, Philosophy, Astronomy, Astrology and Mathematics.

Imam Ahmad Raza lived for 28 years, 2 months and 5 days in the 13th century, in which he gained recognition due to his efforts in writing and research, teaching and sermons; and he lived for 39 years, 1 month and 25 days of the 14th century, which he spent in holding up the flag of Islam, refuting the innovators, promoting the truth and fighting against

falsehood. He supported the Sunnah and challenged the Bid'ah. Whenever and howsoever he possibly could, he used his knowledge to promote the Shari'ah and refute all types of falsehood – and in doing so – he did not let anything stop him including any important personalities. He never craved fame and praise nor did he care what people said against him as long as he spoke the truth.

He was given such a brilliant mind that he completed his religious education at the age of 13 years and 10 months. He is amongst the greatest Hadith scholars of his age and in Fiqh, the whole of the 14th century did not produce a jurist to his like. Hence, 'Allama Iqbal pays tribute to his juristic brilliance thus:

> "Hindustan [India] did not produce such a genius Faqih [jurist] as him. I have read his fatawa and they are proof of his extraordinary intellect. When Mawlana [Ahmad Raza] forms an opinion; he sticks to it. This is because he only decrees a ruling after careful thought. Hence, there is never any need to change any ruling."

Imam Ahmad Raza was also a poet par excellence. His collection of religious poetry, *Hada'iq-e-Bakhshish,* has received praise by hundreds of poets, researchers, critics and scholars. There have also been Ph.D. theses that have been completed on his poetry.

He was also a master of ancient and modern philosophy. This can be seen from books of his such as *al-Kalimatu'l Mulhima, Nuzul-e-Ayaat-e-Furqan* and *Fauz-e-Mubeen*. As for his acumen relating to secular sciences, his answer to Sir Dr. Ziauddin's mathematical problem is proof enough. Sir Ziauddin, vice chancellor of Muslim University, Aligarh, was sent to Imam Ahmad Raza by Mawlana Sayyid Sulaiman Ashraf. Mufti Burhan-ul-Haq was eye-witness to this event and said:

> "Dr. Ziauddin came outside and addressed Sayyid Sulaiman Ashraf and said that it is doubtful that such a fine scholar is alive today. Allah has given him such knowledge that my mind is baffled. Alongside religious knowledge, he has such plentiful knowledge of mathematics, algebra and geometry that he solved that problem in a matter of minutes that I could not solve in weeks. He is certainly worthy of a Nobel Prize but he is not hungry for fame. May Allah grant him a long life and may He let people benefit from him."[3]

[3] Ikram-e-Imam Ahmad Raza, p.59-60, Lahore, 1981

> of the weak explanation that excludes Kufr - we shall refrain from making Takfir".[9]

Mawlana Ashraf Ali Thanwi himself says:

> "I have abundant respect for Ahmad Raza in my heart. He calls us Kafir but only on the basis of love for the Prophet sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam and on no other ground".

Murtaza Hasan Darbhangwi, Head of Education at Deoband, says:

> "If according to Ahmad Raza Khan some scholars of Deoband were as he perceived them to be, then making Takfir of them was Fard upon him. If he did not call them Kafir, then he himself would have been a Kafir. Like the Qadianis – when the scholars found out of their Kufr, then it is Fard for them to make Takfir and if they do not, then they themselves would become Kafir because he who does not call a Kafir a Kafir, he himself becomes one".[10]

When Imam Ahmad Raza did finally issue the judicial verdict deserved of the statements of disrespect by the scholars of Deoband, he did so by sending the statements to the scholars of Haramayn who issued the same verdict as Imam Ahmad Raza. There are over 300 endorsements to *Husam al-Haramayn* which show that the fatawa of Imam Ahmad Raza were accepted by other scholars.

Those achievements that make him a Mujaddid

Whether non-Islamic movements and practices arose from within the Muslims or from the Kuffar; Imam Ahmad Raza proved his status as a Faqih and Mujaddid when he strove against these and other societal ills with the might of his pen. Notions of apostasy were uncovered by him and Muslims were warned against them. With his continuous efforts, he protected the sanctity of Islam and was unwavering even in the face of opposition. Hence, it was after seeing such endeavours that in 1318 AH / 1900 CE at a conference in Patna, in the presence of thousands of listeners and hundreds of local and national scholars including: Mawlana Abdul Qadir Badayuni (d. 1319 AH), Mawlana Ma'wan Husain Rampuri [son of Mufti Irshad Husain Rampuri (d. 1311 AH)], 'Allama Hidayatullah Rampuri [d. 1326 AH], Sayyid Shah Abdus Samad Phaphondwi [d. 1333 AH], Mawlana Muhib Ahmad Badayuni [d. 1341 AH], Mawlana Abdul Kafi

[9] Salla's Suyuf al-Hindiya - Imam Ahmad Raza
[10] Ashaddu'l Adhab, p. 13

Whenever someone returned from Hajj, he would ask them if they had been to visit Sayyidina Rasulullah sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam and if they had, he would immediately kiss their feet.

His refutation of the insulters of Sayyidina Rasulullah sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam

The scholars of Ahlu's Sunnah defended the sanctity of Prophethood and they performed a Jihad against attacks on established beliefs. Following in their footsteps, the Imam of Ahlu's Sunnah, Mawlana Imam Ahmad Raza Hanafi Qadri Barkati Barelwi protected the creed of the Ahlu's Sunnah with his pen; Books like *Kanzu'l Iman fi Tarjamatu'l Qur'an*, *Al-'Ataya al-Nabawiya fi al-Fatawa al-Ridawiyah*, *Jadd al-Mumtar 'ala Radd al-Muhtar*, *Hada'iq-e-Bakhshish* and *al-Dawlah al-Makkiyah* are proof of his efforts to ward off the mischief. As a part of this service are his *Fatawa al-Haramayn Bi Rajafi Nadwat al-Mayn* (1317 AH, 1899 CE), *Al-Mu'tamad al-Mustanad* (1320 AH, 1902 CE) and *Husaam al-Haramayn* (1324 AH) in which he passed the juridical verdict that the writings of Kufr by the scholars of Deoband deserved and presented it to the scholars of Haramayn (Makka and Madina) who wrote approvals [taqriz] for that fatwa. Read *Fazil-e-Barelwi 'Ulema-e-Hijaz ki Nazar Mein* written by Prof. Dr. Mas'ud Ahmad for more details.

Imam Ahmad Raza considered it to be contrary to adab [respect] to use words or phrases loosely when referring to Allah ta'ala or the Prophets; because even though the literal meaning might seem correct, they still remain disrespectful. According to Imam Ahmad Raza, such words are present in Molvi Muhammad Qasim Nanotwi's *Tahzeerun Naas*, Molvi Ashraf Ali Thanwi's *Hifzul Iman*, Molvi Khalil Ahmad Anbethawi's *al-Baraheen al-Qati'ah*, Molvi Isma'il Dihlawi's *Sirat-e-Mustaqeem* and *Taqwiyatul Iman* and Molvi Mahmood Hasan's *al-Jahd al-Maqal*.

Imam Ahmad Raza was very careful in making Takfir. After he saw the statements which insulted Sayyidina Rasulullah sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam in the books of the leaders of Deoband, it took approximately 20 years for him to issue the actual verdict of Kufr against them. He continuously sent letters by registered post to the 'Ulama of Deoband for them to retract their statements but to no avail. For example, it was a whole 13 years after the publication of *Hifz al-Iman* that Imam Ahmad Raza issued the fatwa of Kufr. He was not at all hasty in making Takfir. This can be seen when he wrote regarding Isma'il Dihlawi:

> "There is a difference between a statement being Kufr and the bearer being a Kafir. We shall practice extreme caution and adopt silence on this issue. As long there is there is the weakest

Imam Ahmad Raza possessed a very powerful memory. He himself says that some people who are not well acquainted with me write *Hafiz* with my name. I am not a *Hafiz* but when I hear someone recite a part of the Holy Qur'an, I can then repeat the same part back to them. When he did memorise the whole Qur'an, it only took him a month where he would memorise one chapter a day between 'Asr and Maghrib.

He was also able to read very quickly and retain what he had read. He borrowed *'Uqud ad-Dariya* from Mawlana Wasi Ahmad Muhaddith Surati and managed to read the two-volume work in one day. When asked what he would do when he needed to quote from the book, he replied that the contents of the book were now in his mind for ever.

His mastery of Fiqh

It is normally the case that scholars begin to pen their works after they have graduated from their religious education. However, Imam Ahmad Raza is amongst those scholars who began to author books during their student days. He began to issue judicial verdicts [fatawa] the very day he graduated and the very first fatwa he ever decreed was so well researched and comprehensive that his father, Mawlana Naqi Ali Khan - himself a renowned Mufti of his era - was astounded. Imam Ahmad Raza began writing fatawa at the tender age of 13 years and 10 months and continued this till his demise in 1340 AH – a total of 54 years.

It is unfortunate that some of his earlier fatawa could not be kept safe. Those that remain have been gathered in the form of *al-'Ataya al-Nabawiya fi al-Fatawa al-Ridawiyah*. They cover 12 volumes, each of 900-1000 pages. Finding such a voluminous fatwa work is rare and the research qualities of Imam Ahmad Raza can be seen throughout the work. The fatawa have been a source of reference for the Hanafi school ever since they were written.

The total number of monographs and books written by him number around 1000 that cover over 50 subject areas. By 1887, at the age of 30 years, he had already written 75 books and treatises and by 1909, at the age of 43 years, this number had increased to approximately 500.

As is evident, Imam Ahmad Raza did write a lot of books but what must be noted is that the quantity of books is not what makes Imam Ahmad Raza great; it is the quality of each one that makes him great. In many cases, one page written by Imam Ahmad Raza is more valuable than whole books of other scholars.

His excellence in Fiqh can be seen from the number of references he cites for each issue. Some examples of this are seen below:

1. Can the Janazah prayer be repeated? Imam Ahmad Raza compiled a monograph on this matter and dealt with the issue by segregating it into 10 categories. He cited 207 references and at another place also gathered 40 other references of Hadith and books of Fiqh.
2. Can the Awliya hear and assist after their demise? He answered this by compiling a lengthy monograph named *Hayat al-Mawat fi Bayani Sama'il Amwat*. He first cited 60 ahadith and then gathered 200 sayings of the Sahaba, Tabi'in and then gathered a further 100 references of those scholars that are revered by the Wahabis. Not just this, he then compiled another 150 page book on this issue.
3. He was asked about making du'a after Salah. He cited one verse of the Holy Qur'an and then presented a hadith from 10 different books whereas Mawlana Abdul Haleem Farangi Mahalli only presented one hadith as his answer and Molvi Muhammad Nazeer Husain, the leader of the Ahle Hadith, also only managed one hadith.
4. Abiding by times of Salah is compulsory and joining prayers is impermissible. He wrote a monograph on this issue named *Hajiz al-Bahrain* in which he presented 7 verses of the Holy Qur'an and 36 ahadith from famous books of Hadith.
5. The famous Hadith scholar of the age, 'Allama Wasi Ahmad Muhaddith Surati, asked Imam Ahmad Raza a question regarding the 'Amama [turban]. The latter gathered 40 ahadith on the blessings of the 'Amama and also their references. Muhaddith Surati also questioned about a Hadith that some claimed was weak. Imam Ahmad Raza replied in a way that all allegations were refuted.

Other aspects of his superlative knowledge of Fiqh can be seen from his answers to perennial issues. For example, when the issue of currency notes arose, the scholars were baffled. Even the Hanafi Mufti of Makka, Mawlana Jamal bin Abdullah, was unable to provide a comprehensive answer and left it by saying: ا َلعلم امانة فى اعناق العلماء

It is a favour upon the whole Muslim ummah that Imam Ahmad Raza answered the question with utmost clarity. When he went to his second Hajj in 1323 AH, news of the brilliance of *al-Dawlah al-Makkiyah* had spread far and wide. Hence, the scholars took advantage of his visit and asked 12 questions about currency notes. Imam Ahmad Raza wrote *Kifl al-Faqih al-Fahim* and when he went to the library of Haram on 4th Safar 1324 AH, he found the Mufti-e-Hanafiya, Mawlana Abdullah bin Siddiq, reading *Kifl al-Faqih* and when he reached the point where Imam Ahmad Raza had cited *Fath al-Qadir* which said that: If a man wishes to sell a piece of paper for Rs. 1000, then this is permissible; the Mufti was shocked and whilst hitting his thigh he exclaimed: "Jamal bin Abdullah, how did you miss such a clear evidence?" By saying this, the current Mufti [Abdullah bin Siddiq] was addressing the Mufti of old [Jamal bin Abdullah].

"I taught at Madrasah Mazhar-e-Islam in Bareilly for approximately 9 years and was in charge of teaching the most advanced books. Whenever I came across any difficulty I would go to the library of Imam Ahmad Raza and look for the book within which I was having difficulty and would always find that Imam Ahmad Raza had written a marginalia in the book which solved my problem. I also found that those complex parts that are left alone by other commentators, Imam Ahmad Raza had written marginalia to even those".

Volumes 1-7 and 10-11 of Fatawa Ridawiyah contain a total of 4095 fatawa. Out of this, 1061 are questions sent to Imam Ahmad Raza by other scholars. This shows that along with the general public, the scholars also turned to Imam Ahmad Raza to find solutions to their problems.

His refutation of Ahlu'l Bid'ah [people of innovation]

Those who wished to challenge the greatness of Allah by attributing deficiencies to Him were refuted by Imam Ahmad Raza. He wrote *Subhan al-Subbuh 'an 'Aybi Kadhibi al-Maqbuh* and wrote another 5 monographs on the issue of Imkan-e-Kidhb. He also refuted those who believed in Allah having a body by compiling *Qawari' al-Qahhar 'alal Mujassamatu'l Fujjar*. Refuting ancient philosophers, he wrote a lengthy monograph named *al-Kalimatu'l Mulhima*. He strongly refuted those who insult and curse the dear Prophet sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam, his companions, his family, the Mujtahid Imams and the saints. As for the fitna of Qadian, he tore it from the roots by writing 5 monographs against it and was the first scholar to issue a fatwa of Kufr against it. It can easily be seen from his literary masterpieces that he strove against all the prevalent innovations of his era and saved the Muslim ummah from their dangers.

His love for Sayyidina Rasulullah sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam

Many scholars have paid tribute to his sincerity, honesty, piety and to the purity of his heart but the whole world pays tribute to his unfaltering adherence to the Qur'an and Sunnah and his love for Sayyidina Rasulullah sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam. Not only his followers; even unbiased opponents of his are witness to the reality of his love. He awakened such an inspiring love for the Prophet sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam that the dwellings of the heart began to shine like mirrors. Every day and night in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, England, Holland, the USA and Africa, his poetic masterpiece is heard thus:

مصطفٰی جانِ رحمت پہ لاکھوں سلام
شمع بزم ہدایت پہ لاکھوں سلام

Imam Ahmad Raza was loved by the scholars of Haramayn. Shaykh Karimullah Muhajir Madani [student of Shaykh al-Dala'il Muhammad Abdul Haq Muhajir Madani (d. 1333AH)] writes his account thus:

> "I have spent many years in Madina. Thousands of people of knowledge including scholars and mystics come here. They can be found in every street of the city and the locals do not pay much attention to them. However, I see that many great scholars flock towards him [Imam Ahmad Raza] and continuously show their respect and reverence. This is the favour of Allah that He grants to whomsoever He wishes."[6]

The famous historian, Mawlana Rahman Ali, adds:

> "After Maghrib at the station of Ibrahim 'alaihis salam, Imam al-Shafi'iyah Husain bin Salih Jamalu'l Layl, without any introduction, grabbed the hand of Mawlana Ahmad Raza Barelwi and looked at his face for a long time. He then said,
>
> لاَ َجاِلِّنّىٰنُورَ الله مِن هٰذا الجَبِيْن
>
> He then granted him Ijazahs for both the *Sihah Sitta* and the Qadri order with a special signature in which he named him as *Ziauddin Ahmad*. The sanad [chain of transmission] that he granted was unbroken till Imam Bukhari."[7]

Abu'l Hasan Ali Nadwi writes:

> "The scholars of Hijaz discussed some issues of Fiqh and Kalam with Imam Ahmad Raza and he wrote some monographs to present to them. He also answered some questions for them. His multitude of knowledge, speed of writing, acumen and intelligence left people amazed and astonished."[8]

The 'Ulama turn to Imam Ahmad Raza [Marja'ul 'Ulama]

Mawlana Waqaruddin, the student of Mawlana Amjad Ali A'zmi, writes regarding the knowledge of Imam Ahmad Raza:

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[6] Translation from Arabic – al-Ijazat al-Mateena, Mawlana Hamid Raza Qadri Barelwi

[7] Tazkira 'Ulama-e-Hind, p.16, Lucknow, 1914

[8] Translation from Arabic – Nuzhatu'l Khawatir, vol.8, p.38-39, Da'iratu'l Ma'arif, Hyderabad, 1970

His Fiqhi brilliance can also be seen by the fact that he was the first to create synchronicity in the rulings of the Shari'ah. Before him, the Fuqaha had split religious rulings into the following: (1) Fard (2) Wajib (3) Sunnah Mu'akkada (4) Sunnah Ghayr Mu'akkada (5) Mustahab (6) Mubah (7) Haram (8) Makruh Tahrimi (9) Makruh Tanzihi.

This way, there were 5 levels of ordainment but only 3 levels of forbiddance. Imam Ahmad Raza felt that there should be a balance and that there should be an equal number of each. Hence, he devised the following:

Rulings of the Shari'ah

Imam Ahmad Raza was a great Faqih because he was able to convey what Fuqaha before him had researched in their own books but he was also able to add his own research to issues. For example, Fatawa Ridawiyah has 311 points on Tayammum whereas previous works of Fiqh have 72. The additional 239 points have been derived by Imam Ahmad Raza himself.

His mastery of Hadith

For one to be a Muhaddith; it is not necessary to be a Faqih but to be a Faqih, one must be a Muhaddith and Imam Ahmad Raza was an undisputed Imam of Fiqh. He had a vast knowledge of Hadith and its related sciences including Turuq, Nasikh and Mansukh, Rajih and Marjuh, Tatbiq and Rijal. Sayyid Muhammad Muhaddith Kachochawi writes:

> "His knowledge of Hadith can be seen by the fact that all the ahadith that are the foundation of the Hanafi school were in his memory and those ahadith by which the Hanafi school is [apparently] challenged; Imam Ahmad Raza knew the weaknesses of their Sanad and the meanings of all of them. The knowledge of Asma' al-Rijal is the most difficult science of Hadith; however, if any Sanad was recited before Imam Ahmad Raza and he was asked about any narrator, he would mention the

strengths and weaknesses of each narrator with specific words and when the books of Rijal were checked, those exact words were found therein”.[4]

Concerning the etiquettes of Takhrij al-Hadith, Imam Ahmad Raza wrote a monograph named *al-Rawd al-Baheej fi Adab al-Takhreej*. Mawlana Rahman Ali writes about this work:

> “If there is no book before this on this topic, then the writer can be called the inventor of this science”.[5]

Sayyid Muhammad Muhaddith Kachochawi once asked his teacher, Mawlana Sayyid Wasi Ahmad Muhaddith Surati: “Was the rank of Imam Ahmad Raza the same as yours in the field of Hadith? The latter replied, “Not at all, not at all”. He then said, “Do you understand what I mean by this? Imam Ahmad Raza is *Amir al-Mu’mineen fi’l Hadith* and if I study Hadith at his feet for many years, I will still not reach his rank”.

Imam Ahmad Raza was once questioned about how many books of Hadith he had studied. He replied with the names of 29 books and said that he had studied over 50 books of Hadith. Moreover, when one researcher studied 356 books of Imam Ahmad Raza, he found citations therein from not just 50 books but 240 books of Hadith. As mentioned, these 240 books are mentioned in just 356 of his books whereas he has authored approximately 1000 books; hence, this number is likely to be much greater.

Many a time, for only one hadith, he cites up to 25 references. He wrote 45 books specifically on Hadith and when answering questions, he would cite extensively from the books of Hadith. A few examples are given:

- Is it allowed to refer to Sayyidina Rasulullah sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam as ‘the remover of difficulties’? Answering this, Imam Ahmad Raza wrote *al-Amnu wa’l ‘Ula* wherein he proved his motif by presenting 60 verses and 300 ahadith.
- Some Wahabis denied the fact that Sayyidina Rasulullah sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam is the best of creation. Imam Ahmad Raza answered this fallacious claim by gathering 100 ahadith and named this monograph *Tajalli al-Yaqeen bi Anna Nabiyyina Sayyida’l Mursaleen*.
- When asked about having a feast to remove the difficulties of famine and smallpox, Imam Ahmad Raza presented 60 ahadith to show its permissibility.

[4] Maqalat-e-Yawm-e-Raza, ‘Abdun Nabi Kokab, vol.1, p.41
[5] Tazkira ‘Ulama-e-Hind, Molvi Rahman Ali, Pakistan Historical Society, p.100

- Whilst burying the nonsensical claim of Prophethood by Mirza Qadiani, Imam Ahmad Raza wrote a monograph wherein he presented 121 ahadith which demolished Mirza’s claim.
- On the issue of the second Adhan for Jumu’ah, Imam Ahmad Raza wrote *Shama’im al-Anbar* in Arabic in which he gathered 45 ahadith.
- Regarding the hearing of the dead, he presented 60 ahadith.
- On the creation of Angels, he cited 24 ahadith.
- About dyeing the hair, he presented 16 ahadith.
- Regarding Mu’aniqa [hugging], he cited 16 ahadith.
- On the importance of the beard, he gathered 56 ahadith.
- On the rights of parents, he presented 91 ahadith.
- Regarding the impermissibility of the prostration of reverence, he put forward 70 ahadith.
- On intercession, he gathered 40 ahadith.
- On the issue of pictures, he cited 27 ahadith.

His knowledge of Tafsir

Though he did not compile a single Tafsir of the whole Qur’an; he did compile numerous works that relate to Tafsir. He wrote marginalia to books of Tafsir and when he did write a commentary of just one Sura – Sura ad-Duha – he wrote 600 pages. Glimpses of majestic knowledge of Tafsir can be seen in numerous works of his.

His translation of the Holy Qur’an

One of his most outstanding works is his translation of the Holy Qur’an into Urdu which he named *Kanzu’l Iman fi Tarjamatu’l Qur’an* which is unique and unparalleled in every sense. Each and every line of this translation gives glimpses of the beauty of the Holy Qur’an and shows his mastery of the sciences of Tafsir. The translation takes into account the Glory of Allah and the perfection of His Messenger sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam; hence, it is free from the faults that are found in other translations.

Hajj and visitation to the Sacred Sanctuaries

Imam Ahmad Raza performed Hajj twice – in 1295 AH and 1323 AH. His books *al-Muneeratu’l Wadiya, al-Jaamu’s Sunnah, Fatawa al-Haramayn, Husam al-Haramayn, al-Dawlah al-Makkiya* and *Kiflu’l Faqih al-Fahim* are all masterpieces in the Arabic language that he compiled during his visits to the sacred lands. Some of these books have scores of taqaridh [attestations] from the scholars of Haramayn. This shows that the views and beliefs of Imam Ahmad Raza were the same as those held by the scholars of the sacred lands.